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A tale of two communities

by Will Nicholls

Charles Dickens in *A Tale of Two Cities* opens his novel with: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way – in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only."

In a way, I am looking at a tale of two Canadian communities – Fort McMurray and Attawapiskat – and Dickens' words seem to fit the situation. Both are isolated communities that have been the victims of a crisis that affected the entire community. One having the community nearly burned to the ground and the other with the youth of its population finding the community's living conditions so terrible they view suicide as a more viable option. Both are tragedies that require assistance, understanding, funding and more than a "superlative degree of comparison only."

Superlative can mean one of two things: an extreme or unsurpassed level of something or an exaggeration. Each community has received one or the other. Fort McMurray has been the recipient of the first and Attawapiskat the second.

Fort McMurray is the recipient of Canadian generosity – as of May 11 the Canadian Red Cross has received \$65 million in donations. The federal government has said it will match those

donations. Other estimates expect Ottawa will spend upwards of \$2 billion to see Fort McMurray rebuilt. The insurance companies have estimated they will have to pay out almost \$6 billion to restore homes and businesses. That's an amazing figure as well as a superlative response from around the country.

In comparison, Attawapiskat has received a cold shoulder – a few health workers to talk to the youth and a promise of \$2 million over two years from Ontario. Children so racked with despair that they are trying to kill themselves doesn't tug at the heartstrings of Canadians as much as people fleeing from a forest fire. There is not the same desire on the government's part to create a viable infrastructure to alleviate the situation leading to so many children wanting to die rather than live in the conditions they do.

I am not trying to compare the two, but I want to understand why there is such an outpouring of assistance for one community versus another. Fort McMurray has the highest household income in Canada while Attawapiskat has no figures. I can only imagine it's among the poorest. Is a poorer community not as much of a concern?

Looking at government responses you see an expected \$2 billion or \$25,000 per person for the 80,000 residents of Fort McMurray, while Attawapiskat is looking at \$2 million or \$1,000 per person for 2,000 people.

Hardly seems fair when you look at the crises both face. I have no problem with Fort McMurray being the recipient of Canada's generosity, but I would have expected the same concern and response would have been more equitable to the community of Attawapiskat.

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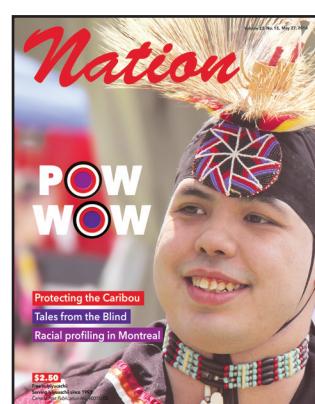


Photo provided by Jinheng Taing

The bear necessities

by Sonny Orr's ghost writers



For many years I have kept my cap on to protect my balding head from the harsh rays of a northern sun. With the ozone layer being depleted we all have to protect ourselves. I have concerns though for the fragile ecosystem of the far North in which I live... mostly. There are the trips down south to experience the fine cuisine and products of the vine, but I digress.

I read about the grizzly-polar bear hybrid shot on the west side of James Bay and hopefully the mixed marriage of animals will be beneficial for our environment. Diversity of bears is a good thing, I feel. I mean, many folks have called me a bear, especially in certain bars in Montreal, but I'm not sure why. I'm not all that ferocious looking.

While I'm on the subject, I can hardly bear the heat. As soon as the snow melts it seems like someone turned on the global toaster oven. Which reminds me, I think my traditional Cree tater tots are browning up nicely.

Ahhh, sweet crunchy goodness. Thinking it was time we contributed to another part of our gastronomic bounty, I've come up with a homemade Cree hot sauce. Ketchup and other important tater tot condiments are often tough to come by up here and even when I am able to snag a bottle of Frank's Red Hot in Val-d'Or it doesn't quite suit my northern palette and gives me such bad gas.

That reminds me about the last time I had a bad case of the natural gas. I was sitting at the beach looking out at the bay, and pondering our ever-changing environ-

ment and wondering whether my personal hydrocarbons would upset the delicate balance of our unsettled universe. Just then, a large flock of geese flew overhead on the way to some faraway destination, and I felt a few drops of wetness. Hmm, it must be raining I thought. But then I quickly realized the fowl were sharing a similar bout of gastric distress.

My beloved and treasured baseball cap has already seen much worse, however. A few nights in the elegant nightspots of downtown Val-d'Or can attest to that. And it was certainly a small sacrifice compared to the greasy goodness this creature provides us. They are valued inhabitants of our land – as is, of course, the lumbering black bear, whether or not he's been getting friendly with the neighbours. (As one of his polar lovers told *the Nation* in an exclusive interview a few years ago, "Once you go black, you never go back.").

Really, we should all celebrate diversity on this planet, whatever form it takes, because it's the key to our survival."

celebrate diversity on this planet, whatever form it takes, because it's the key to our survival. And, my friends and even my enemies, that's no laughing matter.

However, as my neighbours in the blind told me last week, what also isn't funny is the effect produced by my Klik-infused Cree tater tots when combined with my Cree hot sauce experiments. They said it was hard to aim when their eyes were watering so much, which I guess gave new meaning to hunting blind.

I will never again do this in a blind, where of course everyone is armed: at that distance, it's hard to miss.

"Really, we should all celebrate diversity on this planet, whatever form it takes, because it's the key to our survival."

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Under threat



Construction of two new roads spells trouble for the Broadback

by Orlando Blacksmith

The Quebec Ministry for Forests, Wildlife and Parks says it will try to better protect the habitat of the endangered woodland caribou after two new forest access roads were approved for construction near the Broadback River, creating concerns about the negative impacts they could have on the herds.

According to researchers, it takes 150 to 200 years for a mature forest to regrow after logging in this region, meaning generations-long impacts on wildlife. The approval for roads "H" and "I" further endanger the woodland caribou as it could further degrade their remaining habitat.

Pier-Olivier Boudreault, a project director with Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, says that caribou are sensitive to the presence of roads because they attract black bears and other animals that prey on calves. "Logging allows for the growth of berries, which attracts black bears," he said. "They also attract moose, who, in turn, attract wolves."

The Broadback River is part of the ancestral home of Waswanipi's hunters and trappers, where they have traplines and camps used throughout the year to hunt, fish and trap. While locals say this project is better than the original plan, in which logging was going to hit the heart of the Broadback, it's still unstable and could very well cause damage to the last herds of woodland caribou living in the area, which has been largely untouched by human activity.

Only about 6,500 to 8,000 caribou remain in Quebec. According to wildlife biologist Tyler D. Rudolph, who works for the Cree Nation Government, even a limited

project of this scale has the potential to markedly weaken population recovery efforts.

"Populations of woodland caribou received a 'threatened' designation by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada in 2002, and were subsequently classified as 'vulnerable' by the Province of Quebec in 2005," he stated in a letter to the COMEX committee members. "Considering the legacy of industrial forestry to the immediate south, it is reasonable to assume that the project in question will render the area affected by logging inhospitable to caribou indefinitely."

In addition, the road construction would open up the Broadback for further development, effectively ending the Broadback's status as one of Quebec's last intact forests.

The decision to approve these two roads was issued April 28 and made public on May 4. The Quebec government limited it to two logging roads that reach deep into Cree territory, but left all of Waswanipi's traplines untouched. The approval adds about 21 kilometres to an existing road that also connects these two new roads to a highway.

"Approval of the roads in question would not impact all of the Broadback Forest and it would not directly impact the area most frequented by woodland caribou north of the Broadback River," explained Rudolph. "However, it is expected to compromise population viability via reductions in the amount of critical habitat at the population range level."

Waswanipi Chief Marcel Happyjack stressed the need for studies to be done in the area to ensure the



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environmental impacts will remain low and keep the woodland caribou safe. But, he added, "I'm satisfied that the approval of these roads in the Broadback Forest will not encroach on [the Waswanipi] proposed protected area."

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COMEX approves Waswanipi access roads

While the assessment report and certificate of authorization released by COMEX earlier this May has granted approval to two access roads in Waswanipi territory, conditions outlined in the report will reduce the extent of the proposed construction by 43% and leave Waswanipi's last three intact traplines untouched.

The conditions were drawn up after in-depth consultations with the Cree First Nation of Waswanipi, various forestry companies, scientific experts and environmental protection groups.

"The report's recommendations are straightforward," said Waswanipi Chief Marcel Happyjack. "Forestry companies must sit down with us and discuss any development project to be executed on our territory."

Happyjack added that Waswanipi is open to economic development. "We believe it can be achieved in a sustainable and ecological manner while respecting our traditional Cree way of life and maintaining positive relationships with the forestry companies," he said.

Phone app offers Indigenous languages

The First People's Cultural Council (FPCC), a Crown Corporation based in Brentwood, British Columbia, has developed a cellphone application that allows mobile users to switch between traditional languages on their smart phones and type symbols and words that were previously not available.

FPCC's mandate is to "support the revitalization of Aboriginal language" and the new app is poised to do just that; First Voices is available for free on both Apple and Android devices and has keyboard software for over 100 languages, including every First Nations language in Canada, Australia and New Zealand as well as many others from the U.S.

"When our languages are accessible and we're using them, they're visible and that's a huge part of reconcilia-

tion: to be visible, to be valued, for our languages to be supported," said Tracey Herbert, FPCC CEO.

Check out First Voices on the app store today or visit www.firstvoices.com/en/apps to learn more.

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Quebec commits resources to Lac-Simon

The Algonquin First Nation of Lac-Simon will be receiving more funding from the Quebec government to improve its police services in the wake of the deaths of Sandy Tarzan Michel, Anthony Raymond Papatie and local police officer Thierry Leroux.

Quebec Public Security Minister Martin Coiteux and Minister of Aboriginal Affairs Geoffrey Kelley announced May 15 that the Anishnabe Police Force will be returning to Lac-Simon in June. Since the most recent incident when Michel was shot and killed by local police, the Sûreté du Québec has been patrolling the community.

Réjean Hardy, a retired SQ officer now working as a consultant, will be joining the Lac-Simon police department. Over the next five years \$625,000 will be allocated to a youth crime prevention program with another \$30,000 budgeted to install cameras and an improved access control system at the local elementary school. The SQ officers' union has said that Lac-Simon police should be provided equipment, such as tasers, in order to decrease chances of another shooting death.

Lac-Simon's band council is on record stating that in order to properly police the community the police force would need another \$300,000 in funding.

"I'm satisfied," said interim Chief Pamela Papatie to APTN. "There remains work to be done, we'll stay in communication, and the rest we'll have to see."

Statue commemorates Aboriginal war hero

On National Aboriginal Day, June 21, sculptor Tyler Fauvelle will unveil a life-sized bronze statue of Indigenous war hero Sergeant Francis Pegahmagabow. Two years in the making, the sculpture will be placed at the Charles W. Stockey Centre for the Performing Arts in Parry Sound, Ontario, overlooking Georgian Bay and Pegahmagabow's former Parry Island home.

Commissioned by the Ontario Native Education Counselling Association (ONECA), the monument honours Pegahmagabow's outstanding contributions during

his Canadian military service. Originally from the Shawanaga First Nation, Pegahmagabow was a skilled scout and sniper in the First World War and one of a select few to receive a Military Medal and

two bars. The Military Medal was awarded to soldiers demonstrating bravery in battle on land and the two bars designate that the recipient demonstrated such bravery on multiple occasions.

Pegahmagabow is the most decorated Indigenous soldier in Canadian history. After the war he settled at Wasauksing First Nation, where he served as Chief on two separate occasions.

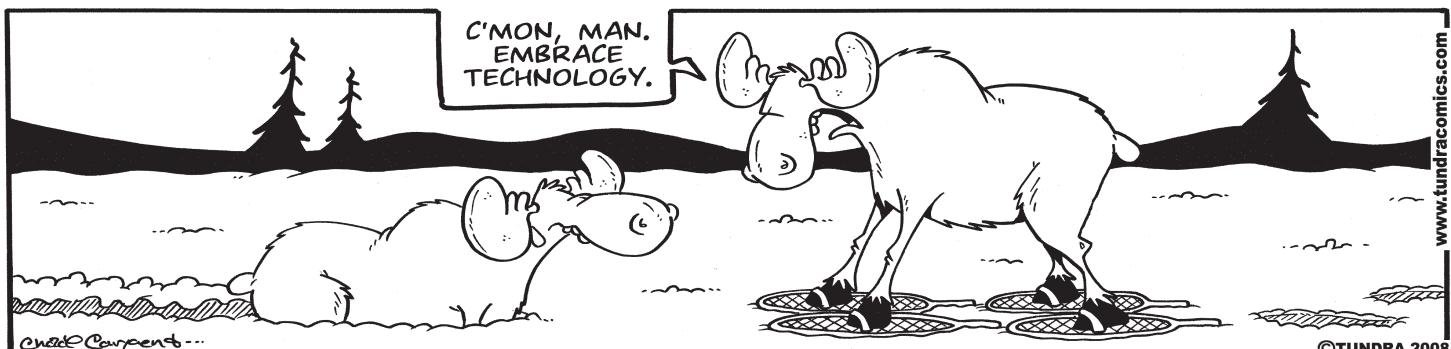
Shawanaga First Nation will dedicate one side of a new four-lane highway bridge being built to Pegahmagabow. The other side will be dedicated to Corporal Charles Nanibush, also of Shawanaga First Nation, who died in action on March 8, 1945, as the Algonquin Regiment fought to reach the Rhine River in Germany.

ONECA still needs to raise \$30,000 to fund the project but are happy to celebrate and educate Canada on the history of Pegahmagabow and what he means to the nearby First Nations of Shawanaga and Wasauksing.

"All of our donors have been so generous," said ONECA president Roger Chum. "We hope people will continue to support this spirit-building commemoration. We'd like more Canadians to hear Pegahmagabow's story, and to learn about Indigenous people's military service to Canada." Donations can be made by cheque payable to "Parry Island Hero," and sent to ONECA, Box 220, 37 A Reserve Road, Naughton, Ontario, P0M 2M0, or online (via Pay Pal) at www.oneca.com.



Lac-Simon



HOME FOR THE

Tales from the Blind

by Will Nicholls

Photos by Brendan Forward & Will Nicholls



HUNT





The hunt at MacLeod's Point

I arrived early for the spring Goose Break, leaving a balmy Montreal April 28 expecting to get to Mistissini just in time for the arrival of the big flocks of geese. Sadly, the ice was just beginning to retreat. In over 20 years hunting at MacLeod's Point I've never seen less open water. As a result the geese were not as plentiful as I had hoped.

I needed at least one for my son Declan's walking-out ceremony. He was born at the end of January this year and like any father, it was important to get a goose for the ceremony even though my brother had said he had one if I needed it. Don has already put aside moose, bear and caribou for that day. I have always loved and respected his generous spirit that he extends to so many around him.

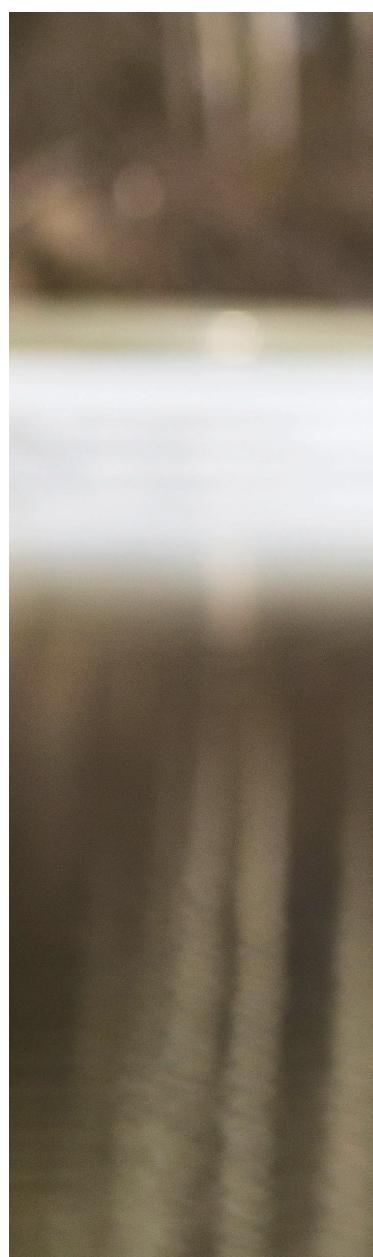
There were others who needed to hunt for a new addition to their family. My cousin Louise MacLeod had a child this year and she was at the blind doing what had to be done. Though most hunters are male this has never been an ironclad rule, even in the past. Her father Don Macleod, who has bagged the season's first goose in Mistissini many times, taught her how to shoot.

That's Don holding the pink shotgun. Sure, it's Louise's weapon, but they say pink is the new black.

Don MacLeod, along with my other uncles, always made me welcome in the blind, where memories are shared, often with a chuckle. One such tale he likes to tell is about me, making me suffer through it with a smile...year after year. When I was a teen, I joined my uncles for Goose Break. Being young I was armed with a single shot .410, the least powerful of the shotguns.

Like most impatient adolescents I was bored when the geese weren't flying. So I said I was going into the bush to hunt partridges. As I walked to the bush a flock of geese flew over. Foolishly thinking they were in range I took aim and fired – too early – and only succeeded in scaring them off as none landed at the blinds.

A few people were upset at my stupidity. In retrospect, it's easier to understand the pride of a youth hoping for a goose was very costly compared to the need to feed our families. But what is special is they still laugh at the memory to this day. It reminds me to look at what I do and what will be the result of my decisions.





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I thank you, Uncle Don, for that lesson and your tales of that time. We all need to be reminded that each action we take has a meaning, but also that family forgives. A little fun is always had with a young impressionable hunter.

Goose Break is like that in that we are there to learn and to teach. Every day there were young cousins hoping for their first goose or if older to hone their skills. The older hunters shared their knowledge, experience, tips and stories to ensure the next generations would carry on the traditions. I am proud of the way we teach our youth to respect the land and our life. I am grateful for what was passed on to me. It was done in a way that serious lessons at times were taught with a gentle humour, a tradition that continues to this day.

And then sometimes there are pranks, though not the nasty type. For example, Errol Mianscum brought down a one-man, store-brought blind. Since almost every blind is handmade some had a bit of fun with him over his fancy version. We suggested using it as a porta-potty, while some wit suggested it was a shaking tent. It was all in good fun and I expect we'll be seeing more blinds like this in the future.

Speaking of futuristic goose blinds, someone asked me about the "invisible blind." Yes, there is one and it's called the "GhostBlind" and there is one for specifically hunting waterfowl.

This spring's Goose Break is over for me and while there are still many wonderful meals to be shared, the memories are what will last the longest.

Errol's blind, i.e. our porta-potty





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Left: Babby Jane Happyjack with kids
Right: Host Wanek Horn Miller

Working it out

Rezolution TV series highlights approaches to healing

by Joel Barde

Every Indigenous community has examples of individuals who are transcending challenges and setting positive examples for others. Unfortunately, the Canadian media usually fails to tell their stories.

Working It Out Together aims to correct this by showcasing success stories about the resilience and strength of certain individuals. Hosted by Olympian Wanek Horn-Miller, the series' third season will feature a wide range of stories, from Inuit teachers approaching education in a traditional way to Mohawk midwives bringing birth back to the home.

According to Michelle Smith, who helped shape the season as a director and content producer, Working It Out Together adds something vital to the media landscape. "It's so needed, it's not even funny," she said.

A college teacher in Montreal, Smith says she's consistently astounded at how little her non-Native students know about their Indigenous neighbours. "It's important to share these stories with the broader community and the communities themselves. It's about validating and celebrating what's going on, the incredible resiliency."

One of the powerful stories featured in this season belongs to Eeyou Istchee's own Wayne Rabbitskin. It's a beautifully rendered portrait of Rabbitskin and his quest to make amends for his alcohol-fuelled, violent past.

A heart-wrenching scene of Rabbitskin seeking forgiveness from women in Chisasibi is nothing short of astonishing. But the episode also zooms out and provides a historical context on how colonialism and residential schools had a devastating impact on

Indigenous men. The history is delivered succinctly and eloquently (it's a half-hour program, after all). It's not presented as an excuse for his behaviour, but provides important context that helps viewers better understand its origins.

Watching the episode, it is amazing just how far Rabbitskin was willing to go in sharing his past. Reached by phone, he said he hoped by doing so he might inspire other men to seek help for addiction and violent tendencies.

"I want men to be healthy. The only way for our communities to be healthy is to have healthy men. There's a lot of impact that happens when men are not healthy. Women are afraid; children are neglected and abandoned. We need to embark on our healing journey," said Rabbitskin.

Smith says the Rabbitskin episode represents what the series aims to do. "We feature people who are stepping out of their comfort zone and facing challenges. We look at issues as a set of systemic issues."

Smith says every episode examines the culture of communities in pre-colonial times to see how to help heal communities in the present. She's hopeful about the future and that a series like Working It Out Together can inspire positive change.

"We're in a moment of resurgence and empowerment," Smith enthuses. "We're telling stories we really want to get out there."

Produced by Rezolution Pictures, the 13-part series begins airing May 31 on APTN and will be accompanied by an online magazine.

Powwow Power

Montreal's urban event finds its feet

by Jesse Staniforth

Photos provided by Jinheng Taing

"There's people here from all over the world," marvelled Pow Wow Montreal organizer Al Harrington, an Anishinaabe from Ontario who now lives in Kanesatake. "I've talked to people from Finland, Germany, Austria, France – even Indians from India!"

Montreal's third urban powwow was a true gathering of Nations. Up to 150 dancers and drummers, joined by 47 vendors, welcomed thousands of visitors to the Vanier College campus May 7-8. As founder of the Red Urban Project, an education initiative to teach Indigenous and non-Indigenous people about Aboriginal culture and history, Harrington explained that there has long been a thirst for a powwow in the city. It's an opportunity for Indigenous people to meet and introduce their songs, stories, regalia and dances to others.

"To me, we should be able to share our First Nations culture through education," said Harrington. "I believe we should all be coming together and working together."

Last year's Pow Wow Montreal, on the grounds of the Beurling Academy in the neighbourhood of Verdun, attracted 60 dancers and drummers and an audience of about 1500. That led to a conversation between the Red Urban Project and Vanier College's Indigenous Circle. Harrington was at the college last year to mount a powwow demonstration for the students, and was already thinking of organizing another event when the Indigenous Circle members told them they'd like to host a powwow on campus.

"I said, 'Would you be willing to do a whole-day powwow?' They said, 'Absolutely.' So I said, 'What about a weekend?' They said, 'Absolutely!' And they pushed it."

The powwow emcee was Gabe Whiteduck, from the Algonquin Nation of Kitigan-Zibi – a figure familiar to many in Eeyou Istchee from his lessons in dancing, drumming and singing across many communities. Aboriginal Affairs Minister Geoff Kelley was in attendance for the Grand Entry, along with Alan DeSousa, Mayor of the Montreal borough of Ville Saint-Laurent (where Vanier College is located), and Sterling Downey, borough councillor for Verdun – a neighbourhood that is home to much of the city's Indigenous population. Cast members from the popular TV program *Mohawk Girls* were on hand, and there were raffles for several items, including a pair of sealskin gloves and a carved moose-antler.

Among the drummers were the Buffalo Hat Singers. Algonquin drummer Philippe Cheezo's roots are in the Lac-Simon Reserve, but growing up,





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he was playing drums with heavy metal and punk bands long before he became a powwow singer.

"I grew up in Sherbrooke, and there were no powwows," said Cheezo. "The first time I realized I didn't know powwow music, I checked it out on websites. First, I was singing at the Native Friendship Centre, for a couple of months. One day, a friend of mine heard me singing at the centre and asked me, 'You want to play with us?' I wasn't sure. I just started singing less than a year [before]. The first time I really started singing with the Buffalo Hat Singers, four years ago, was maybe a week after my audition!"

Cheezo has watched the Montreal powwow bloom since the first instalment two years back, and said he's happy to see many familiar faces from past events.

"It's amazing – I was surprised by the spirit of open-mindedness," he said. "If you want to know powwow, you have to go on the powwow ground. And that's what they're doing. They have powwows in Val-d'Or and other places. But having a powwow in Montreal, to me, that's the best way to show people we're still there. It's a good gathering and a good excuse to heal."

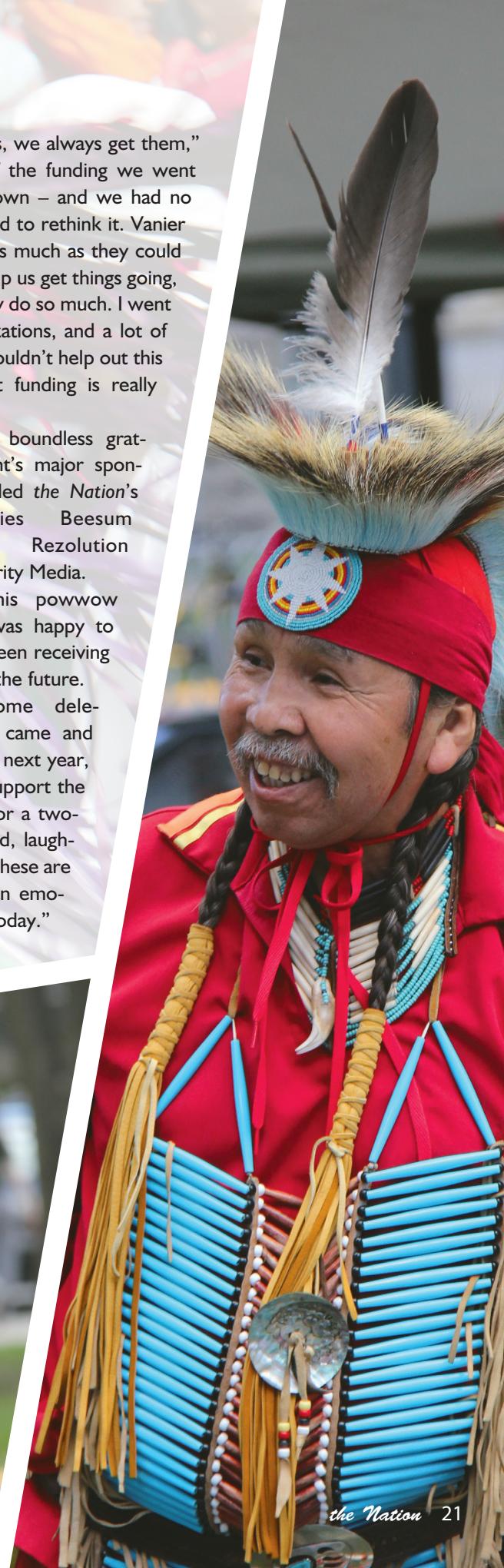
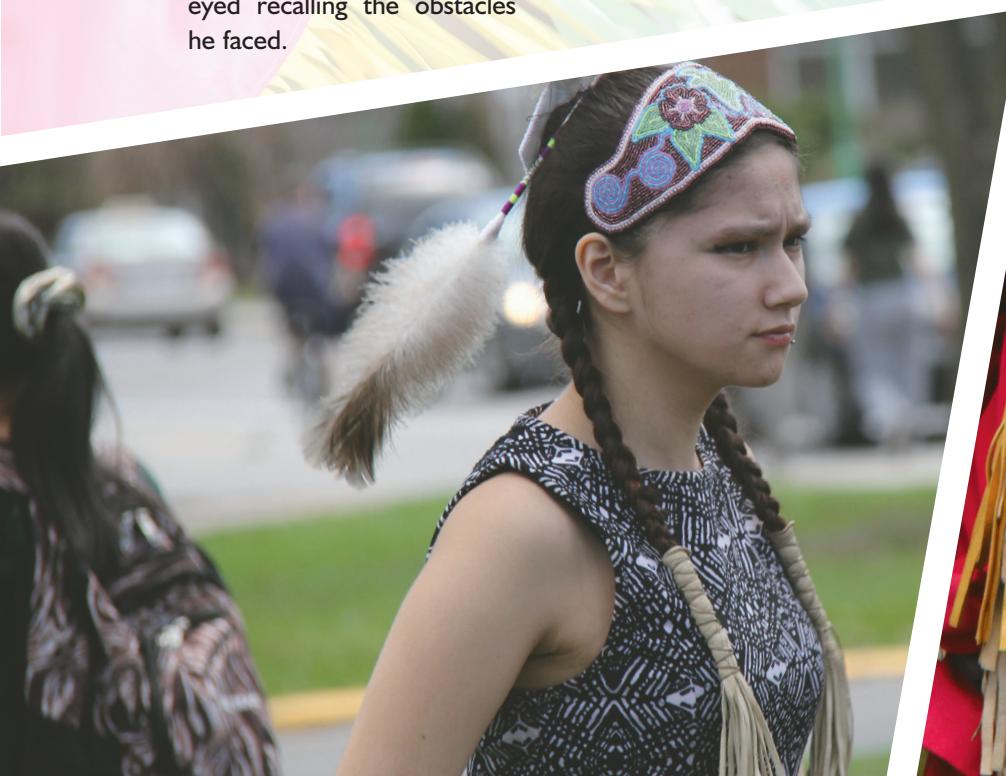
This year's instalment almost didn't happen, and Harrington grew briefly dewy-eyed recalling the obstacles he faced.

"Funding issues, we always get them," he said. "A lot of the funding we went for was turned down – and we had no money. We needed to rethink it. Vanier was trying to do as much as they could on their side to help us get things going, but they could only do so much. I went to a lot of organizations, and a lot of people said they couldn't help out this year. Government funding is really lacking."

He expressed boundless gratitude to the event's major sponsors, which included *the Nation's* sister companies Beesum Communications, Rezolution Pictures and Minority Media.

Dressed in his powwow regalia, Cheezo was happy to report that he'd been receiving good news about the future.

"We had some delegates today who came and informed me that, next year, they're going to support the powwow 100% for a two-day event," he said, laughing off his tears. "These are happy tears! It's an emotional day for me today."





TRAVEL THE POW WOW TRAIL

The Nation's guide
to this summer's
traditional celebrations.

by Joshua Grant

Photos provided by Jinheng Taing



pow•wow

/pou,wou/

noun

The term powow comes from the Algonquin word “pauwau” meaning “spiritual leader.” As the last of the lake and river ice melts away and Goose Break comes to a close, First Nations across Quebec, Canada and the rest of the continent can look forward to these summer cultural celebrations for an opportunity to get back to their roots.

Here is an overview of some of this year’s powwow offerings across the province, elsewhere in Canada and the United States – in chronological order – where you can immerse yourself in Indigenous ceremonies and share timeless traditions with other Aboriginal communities.

Kitigan Zibi Traditional Powwow

The Anishinabeg of Kitigan Zibi’s 2016 powwow is June 4-5 in memory of Karen Buckshot, a long-time organizer who passed earlier this year. The theme is Odidise kidji Gigeng (“a time for healing”) and all activities will be held at the Kikinamadinan School near Maniwaki. Hosted by the Redtail Spirit Singers and Black Bear with Eagle River, Pikwaganagan Traditional Drum, Northern Voice and Akwesasne Water Drum will also be present. Activities include sunrise ceremonies, grand entries, drumming contests, youth games, giveaways and a closing feast.

www.kzpowwow.ca

Métis of Maine Annual Powwow

On the American side of the border, the Métis of Maine celebrate their annual gathering June 4-5 at the Yellow Feather Cultural Center in Dayton, a five-hour drive outside Quebec near Old Orchard Beach. On the schedule are a noon grand entry, drumming, intertribal dancing, Native songs and flute, craft trading, an auction, a raffle, storytelling and a tipi village.

www.metisofmaine.org

Powwow Pikogan

On June 10-12, the Abitibiwinni First Nation hosts a powwow on the Pikogan reserve just outside Amos.



Honour dances for men and women, inter-tribal dances, traditional foods, cultural celebrations and Aboriginal artisans are all on the schedule.

www.tourisme-abitibi-temiscamingue.org

Wollomonuppoag Indian Council Powwow

The Wollomonuppoag Annual Powwow takes place June 11-12 at the Lasallette Fairgrounds in Attleboro, Massachusetts. For more info contact Mark Brintnall at 508-680-6354.

Drums Along the Hudson

On Sunday June 12, Drums Along the Hudson: A Native American and Multi-Cultural Celebration kicks off at 11 am in New York City's Inwood Hill Park. Bringing together dancers, percussionists and storytellers from cultures around the world, the one-day event celebrates international traditions and honours environmental and humanitarian efforts.

www.drumsalongthehudson.org

Unamen Shipu en fête

For the more adventurous powwow enthusiasts, the Innu community of Unamen Shipu (also known as La Romaine) presents Unamen Shipu en fête June 17-21. Unamen Shipu is located approximately 400 kms northeast of Sept-Îles and is accessible only by plane or boat.

Opitciwan Powwow

The Atikamekw community of Opitciwan hosts their powwow celebrations June 18-19 in Obedjiwan, just north of the Gouin Reservoir.

Ottawa Summer Solstice

On June 17-20, the Summer Solstice Aboriginal Festival takes over Ottawa's Vincent Massey Park

to showcase Indigenous arts and culture and host a competition powwow. The Ghost River Singers will be this year's host drummers with William Constant as MC and there are cash prizes for traditional, jingle, grass, fancy shawl and fancy bustle dancing in junior, teen, adult and elder men and women's categories.

www.ottawasummersolstice.ca

National Aboriginal Day

June 21 marks National Aboriginal Day and special events are planned across Quebec. The Native Friendship Centre in Val-d'Or has announced their 7th annual outdoor show with an all-female presentation to honour Indigenous women, featuring Diane Tell, Melisa Pash, Chantal Archambault, Kathia Roch and Laura Niquay. Arts and crafts and traditional food tasting are also planned with the grand entry scheduled for 7 pm. The Screaming Eagles from Lac-Simon will be performing along with traditional dancers Jerry Hunter, Steven Trapper-McKenzie and Charity Lacroix all under the overarching theme "IKWE – A Tribute to Love".

Ekuanitshit Powwow

About halfway between Sept-Îles and La Romaine (Unamen Shipu) along Highway 138 lies the Innu reserve of Ekuanitshit (known in English as Mingan). A member of the Mamat Innuat tribal council, Ekuanitshit's annual powwow is planned for June 21.

Wendake International Powwow

The Wendake powwow promises activities for the whole family as Aboriginal dancers gather to compete in tests of ability, grace and endurance against Indigenous talent from around the world. Taking place June 24-26 on the Huron-Wendat reserve just outside Quebec City, the celebration blends Native



and Catholic traditions and features spaces for crafts and artisans, youth activities and traditional cuisine plus a variety of workshops and special ceremonies.

www.tourismewendake.ca

Return to Our Lands Powwow

The community of Nezaadiikaang is holding their 9th annual powwow June 24-26 at the Savanne River Resort just off Highway 17 in Upsala, Ontario (one hour west of Thunder Bay). Warm-up will be June 24 with the first grand entry happening at 1 pm June 25 followed by a feast that evening.

www.lacdesmillelacsfirstnation.ca

Oakleaf Campground Powwow

Running June 25-26, the Oakleaf Campground Powwow in Chepachet, Rhode Island, combines powwow celebrations with an outdoor camping experience and also hosts a potluck and trade blanket. Check out their Facebook event page by searching Annual Oakleaf Campground Powwow.

Odanak Powwow

The Abenaki First Nation of Odanak is located near the Saint-François River in the Centre-du-Québec region between Drummondville and Trois-Rivières. Celebrating their annual powwow July 1-3, Odanak offers Abenaki specialties such as smoked fish, sagamite and bannock, soup and traditional bread along with all of the usual craftwork, drumming, dancing and Native song.

www.caodanak.com/en/pow-wow

Echoes of a Proud Nation

Kahnawake's annual Echoes of a Proud Nation Powwow happens July 9-10 and is a massive event for merchants, traditional dancers, First Nations and tourists. Aboriginal dancers compete for cash prizes

in a variety of categories including traditional, fancy, jingle, grass and smoke dancing and the grand entry, feasts, celebrations and other activities all take place on the Island of Tekakwitha just outside Montreal.

www.kahnawakepowwow.com

The Great Gathering of Mashteuatsh

Focused on perpetuating age-old traditions and promoting cultural exchange, the Innu First Nations of Mashteuatsh will gather July 15-17 on the western shore of Lac Saint-Jean for their annual powwow. Along with inter-tribal dancing, traditional foods and spiritual ceremonies, the Mashteuatsh festivities also host live music, art demonstrations and traditional athletic competitions.

www.kuei.ca

Essipit Powwow

The event takes place July 21-24 in Essipit, Quebec.
www.innu-essipit.com

Lac-Simon Powwow

The powwow takes place July 23-24 in Lac Simon, Quebec.

www.anishnabenation.ca

Queen's County Farm Museum 38th Annual Mid-Summer Powwow

New York's oldest and largest powwow is hosted by the Thunderbird American Indian Dancers July 29-31 at the Queen's Country Farm Museum's apple orchard in Floral Park. Over 40 First Nations will be represented and the event promises quality Native American art, crafts, jewellery and food alongside traditional powwow competitions. For more info, contact Louis Mofsie at 718 347-3276.

Festival Innu Nikamu

Adjacent to Sept-Îles, the Innu community of Mani-Utenam hosts the annual Innu Nikamu festival August 4-7. Innu Nikamu is a celebration of the arts and Innu traditions that brings together dancers, musicians, Elders, artists, families and tourists in northern Quebec.

www.innunikamu.ca

Listuguj Annual Traditional Powwow

The event takes place August 4-7 in Listuguj, Quebec.
www.listuguj.ca/

Chisasibi Powwow

The powwow takes place August 5-7 near the Chisasibi band office. More info coming soon.

Pessamit Traditional Powwow

August 5-7 in Betsiamites, Quebec.
<https://en-ca.event.com/e/pow-wow-traditionnel-de-pessamit/2938988>

Manawan Powwow

The Manawan powwow is back for a sixth year August 5-7 and will feature the traditional dance, art and music of the Atikamekw and other First Nations.

Tourisme Manawan offers a "Teepee/Powwow" package that gives visitors the chance to spend two nights in a traditional dwelling on an island in Kempt Lake and includes food, ferry, equipment, activities and admission to the main event.

www.voyageamerindiens.com

Festival du conte et de la légende de l'Innucadie

A blend of oral traditions, music and culture, the Innucadie festival brings together Native and non-Native storytellers for 10 days of live entertainment in Natashquan, 350 km east of Sept-Îles on Quebec's lower north shore. The festival runs August 5-15 and features a variety of local, regional and professional artists.

www.quebecaboriginal.com

Gesgapegiag Mawiomi Powwow

The Mi'kmaq Gesgapegiag Powwow runs August 12-14 near New Richmond on Quebec's Gaspé peninsula. For more info, call 418-759-3442.

Rassemblement de la route des Sauvages

Located in the small town of Cacouna in the Rivière-du-Loup region of Quebec, the First Nation of

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Viger is the smallest reserve in Canada and home of the Maliseet. Their annual powwow celebration takes place August 13-14 and combines Cacouna's Festival Historique with the Maliseet's Route des Sauvages gathering. It offers an opportunity for cultural exchange and a weekend getaway on the edge of the Saint Lawrence River.

www.bassaintlaurent.ca/en/events/festival-deux-nations-une-fete-59

Oujé-Bougoumou Powwow

OJ's powwow happens August 13-14 and will be hosted by Cree Confederation. Everyone is welcome, vendors have an open invitation and there will be specials for the men's traditional dance and women's fancy shawl. The exact location has yet to be determined as this year's event may be held indoors. Anyone looking for more information can contact Redfern Mianscum via Facebook or by phone: 418-514-8128.

Mistissini Powwow

Mistissini and Oujé-Bougoumou will be working together to plan their respective gatherings this summer as they are scheduled on consecutive weekends. Keep an eye on the Mistissini Powwow Facebook page and contact Luke MacLeod at 418-770-8680. Mistissini's event will be held August 19-21.

Wôlinak Powwow

One of the former seven First Nations of Canada, the Abenaki First Nation of Wôlinak hosts its annual powwow August 19-21 near Trois-Rivières. A family event, this gathering promises dancing, singing,

recounting of legends, showcasing of traditional crafts, music and fireworks.

www.cawolinak.com

Timiskaming First Nation Powwow

The event takes place August 27-28 on the Timiskaming reserve in Quebec.

www.tourisme-abitibi-temiscamingue.org

Kanesatake Traditional Powwow

A short drive from Montreal, Kanesatake's annual Traditional Powwow will be held August 27-28. Craft vendors, First Nations song and dance, entertainment, exhibitions and workshops are all on the program. For info, call 514-892-8731.

www.quebecaboriginal.com

Wemotaci Powwow

Held September 3-4 in Wemotaci, Quebec, a variety of First Nations will gather for traditional dancing, artisan tents and trading and tasting of traditional foods.

www.tourismehautemauricie.com

Akwesasne International Powwow

The Mohawk Nation of Akwesasne has planned their annual international powwow September 10-11, when many First Nations folks from Canada and the US arrive for dance, drum and smoke dance competitions and traditional craft and food vendors. This year features the Tlacopan Aztec Dancers and all events take place on Cornwall Island near Cornwall, Ontario.

www.akwesasnepowwow.com



DOING SOMETHING

Montreal fundraiser spotlights suicide crisis

by Joel Barde

The founder of a grassroots Montreal fundraising initiative says it's time for non-Native Canadians to pay more attention to the challenges facing their Indigenous neighbours. WeDoSomething Montreal aims to help in the struggle against youth suicide in First Nations communities.

"It feels like something is bubbling to the surface," said founder Sophie Tarnowska. "We can't ignore it anymore. There are just too many suicides in the headlines. And it's happening right here."

WeDoSomething is holding a fund-raising event at the end of May in support of Dialogue for Life, an organization dedicated to preventing suicides in Indigenous communities. Tickets are offered on a sliding scale to suit all income levels. Tarnowska – who started WeDoSomething Montreal in October in order to raise funds to support refugees in Europe – wants her events to be accessible to a wide-range of people.

Galas and fundraisers tend to be the preserve of the well-heeled, she notes:

"The truth is, those things can be super boring!"

So Tarnowska is promoting this event as a fun evening with like-minded, socially conscious Montrealers from different walks of life – French and English, rich and not-so rich – while acknowledging the seriousness of the cause that may inform the tone of the evening.

"I'm not worried about it," she said, however. "We're going to go through it together. There may be points that will be sad. But the point is you came and we're talking about it. And maybe you learned something about it."

That educational component is vital to Tarnowska, who used to work as a journalist. She uses her fundraisers as ways to learn about and raise awareness for the causes they support. She writes and shares stories on the organizations that receive fundraising dollars and the people who use their services.

Dialogue for Life organizes conferences every November that bring front-line workers, police and youth to Montreal for workshops and healing sessions.

According to director Thelma Nelson, the money that will be raised is much needed. Dialogue for Life is primarily government funded, and over the years funding has been consistently cut back.

Nelson is encouraged by Tarnowska's support. Suicide, she says, is becoming an epidemic in some Indigenous communities and, in a disturbing trend, becoming more frequent among older people.

"There are more and more non-Natives who want to learn about what we've gone through," said Nelson. "Because we're having a wave of suicide in Ontario, people are starting to notice. We have to look at it. We can't keep going on like this."

Dialogue for Life is not the first Indigenous organization Tarnowska has worked with. WeDoSomething Montreal's last fundraiser was in support of The Native Women's Shelter of Montreal. It raised \$5000; and Quebec's Minister of Aboriginal Affairs Geoffrey Kelley showed up and donated a \$2000 cheque to the shelter.

For Tarnowska, working in support of Indigenous causes has forced her to reckon with some uncomfortable truths. Despite her first-rate education and curiosity in the world, she is learning about this continent's First Peoples for the very first time.

"I know about Rwanda. I can talk about Haiti and the Middle East. But I don't know anything about my own culture," she said. Tarnowska feels ignorance on Indigenous history and issues is a widespread problem among non-Indigenous Canadians and is appalled that in 2016 her daughter doesn't learn about Indigenous history in school. "It's criminal," she said.



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WHO'S AT THE DOOR

Are Montreal police officers racially profiling Indigenous people?



by Jesse Staniforth

"Have you had any issues with Aboriginal people?" This was the question that police officers in Montreal may have been going door-to-door asking residents of certain neighbourhoods.

It happened at least once – and in a triumph of bad luck for the Montreal police (SPVM), the person who answered the knock was Ossie Michelin, a Nunatsiavut Inuk journalist from Labrador who happens to have a more European-looking complexion. Officers told him they were knocking on doors in Michelin's downtown neighbourhood asking whether residents had been having problems with homeless people.

Except Officer Alex Mitu didn't say "*itinérants*" (the French word for homeless). Instead he said "*autochtones*" – Aboriginal people. And while he quickly corrected himself, Michelin said he continued to talk about "homeless Inuit sleeping in parks and scaring people." The officer warned Michelin that he should keep an eye out for homeless people in alleys trying to get into backyards and break into houses, and he gave Michelin a flyer explaining this was part of a proactive strategy following complaints the previous summer about the behaviour of homeless "*autochtones*." The flyer urged residents to call 911 if they saw anyone:

- Consuming alcoholic beverages
- Loitering or being passed out drunk

- Fighting
- Creating a disturbance
- Urinating
- Interrupting traffic

The flyer went on to state that the SPVM intends to prioritize helping people and referring them to community resources, but underlines that they do not rule out enforcing municipal laws. The flyer didn't use the words "homeless" or "Indigenous," but Michelin said he felt it was clear from Officer Mitu's choice of words just who the SPVM was targeting.

Cabot Square, at the corner of Ste-Catherine and Atwater streets, has been a hangout for homeless people for decades, and the square's homeless population has a higher percentage of Inuit than in other neighbourhoods in part because of the nearby Fort Street housing provided to Inuit in town for medical treatment.

"There are homeless Inuit around here," Michelin said. "There are lots of homeless people. The housing on Fort Street is still there, and there are a lot of people who live in Verdun and Pointe-Saint-Charles, as well, because it's cheap and more English. Plus, there are several centres in Verdun, including an employment centre. So people walk between Verdun and Fort Street all the time, and this area is on the route."

When the doorbell rang, Michelin was entertaining his friend Stephen Agluvak Puskas, a Nunavut Inuk

researcher, radio producer and activist. They'd just returned from Home Depot and were in the process of putting together a barbecue for a dinner party that evening.

"We were waiting on more people to come and that's when the doorbell rang," he said. "I thought it was guests arriving early to make supper with us!"

In other words, the two Inuit professionals were doing what most Montrealers do on a warm evening – grilling some burgers, cracking a few cold ones and relaxing with friends. Until the police showed up to warn them about drunk Inuit. And that's one of the things that really bothered Michelin, who saw it as racial profiling.

Michelin notes that there are plenty of other populations in Montreal who engage in the same kinds of behaviour that the flyer warned against – drinking, fighting, passing out drunk or causing disturbances – but that police do not seem to be in a hurry to warn residents about.

Inuit like to hit the town just like everybody else – especially when they're out of their communities for a business or school trip, or a visit to relatives.

"You're in Montreal – you go to the bars and party!" Michelin exclaimed. "I'm from Labrador and I've come down to the city many times. It's exciting because I don't have to drink with the same damn people!"



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But the apparent assumption by the officers that Inuit are more likely to be alcoholics or homeless was what hurt the most, he said.

"With the cops using 'autochtones' and 'itinérant' interchangeably, it promotes this stereotype to do with visibility," he told *the Nation*. "A lot of people ask me, 'Why are there so many homeless Aboriginal people?' Well, that's because they're the ones you notice. This just drives home the stereotype that Aboriginal people in the city are homeless. That's far from the case! It's a large, diverse population – some are homeless, but many are not. You see well-to-do Indigenous folks walking down the street so you think they're Latino or Asian, but then you see a homeless person and presume they're obviously an Inuk. The cops using the two words interchangeably just spreads that message around."

Some homeless Inuit at Cabot Square were not happy about their recent interactions with police. Speaking to *the Nation* on the condition of anonymity, one Inuk woman said, "I know what my rights are. And I bet they know them too. But that doesn't matter, they still slap the cuffs on me."

"They use violence when they could use communication," said her friend, a man who also declined to give his name.

Michelin has complained to the Montreal police ethics commission about the incident, which he said was racial profiling. However, in an interview with the CBC, SPVM Officer Alex Mitu denied the characterization. "I don't want to call that a mistake," Mitu said. "It was just a slip of the tongue."

According to SPVM Aboriginal Liaison Officer Carlo De Angelis, it's a mistake to believe that the SPVM or Station 15 are cracking down on homeless Inuit.

"The [flyer] lists behaviours that will not be accepted by the Montreal police," he told *the Nation*, "but it does not target any community, race, colour or language. We've worked so hard with all the communities. With the Aboriginal community, we have a great relationship with the Réseau, with Makivik, [with other Indigenous organizations...], everybody's working together. Those six principles and behaviours target nobody, only the individual who does those behaviours. If I behave that way, then it's not accepted."

De Angelis pointed out that just prior to the incident, Station 15 had called on him to help them organize "mixed patrols" with representatives of the Native Friendship Centre of Montreal and the Chez Doris women's shelter. Following that meeting, Station 15 had scheduled those patrols to begin at the end of May and continue throughout June. After six years of working with vulnerable populations, De Angelis (whose parents were Italian immigrants) feels he

has made strong and close ties with Montreal's Indigenous communities.

Asked whether he notices Indigenous people in Montreal who are worried they'll be unfairly targeted by the police, De Angelis said, "Personally speaking, whenever I'm on patrol, the amount of years I've been creating a relationship with the Aboriginal community, they come towards me. Sometimes they even forget that I'm a police officer. I don't feel that [they fear police officers] at all."

De Angelis runs 45-minute sensitivity training sessions for different stations throughout the city on key issues related to Aboriginal homelessness – six so far this year. At the moment he's upgrading the training to a four-hour program, which he hopes to have in place by next year.

"The objective is to have the police officer have an understanding," he said. "Sometimes you see somebody under the influence of alcohol. It's a symptom. You explain to them the traumas they live with, the past, the residential schools. Give them the historical context: why they come to Montreal, the actual situation here, how many members of the communities are in Montreal, and what resources are available. Exchange with the intervention workers what works and what makes an intervention easier – and work together, because the key is to have everybody working as one."

Michelin, however, noted that Officer Mitu and his partner had received this training last year, and it didn't change much about their interaction with him.

"In theory they learned about this – but what does that mean?" Michelin asked. "If you spent a few hours on this a year ago, is that really an effective strategy? Even if they do a whole week every few years!"

Citing recent reports by the CBC that the SPVM is 93% white, with only 7% of its officers drawn from visible minorities, Michelin said, "It speaks a lot to the reality of who wants to become a police officer. In Montreal, 70% of the people identify themselves as white. That's a big gap between the number of citizens of different races and the number in the police force. It's not reflective of the city, and because of that it breeds environments where people don't realize that saying things like 'Watch out for homeless Native people' is not okay. There are systemic issues, but a lot of it is the culture of the police force."

Though Michelin said he was glad that the SPVM had an Aboriginal Liaison Officer, he was disappointed that it was not a person from an Aboriginal community.

"There's a big difference between a title and the structure and culture of an organization," Michelin said. "Saying and doing these things is a step in the right direction, but not so much when it compares to the actual reality of things."



The graduation trip

www.underthenorthernsky.com

Elementary school graduating classes are heading out on special trips all over the country. I remember what a big deal that tour was for my classmates and I when we visited Toronto and Niagara Falls. Up to that point I had not ventured out much into the outside world. Most of my experience had to do with my home in the remote community of Attawapiskat.

Suddenly, as part of a reward for sticking with school, we were flown out of the north and driven in a bus along major southern highways. It was so exciting to finally experience first hand what I had seen on television as the modern, southern world. Just the fact that I could leave my remote home and move freely along a road to places far away was amazing.

Every stop at a place on the highway was exciting as I could order burgers, fries, milk shakes and sodas. Once we hit the city, I was shocked by how big it was. My friends and I had sore necks from straining to look up at the skyscrapers in downtown Toronto. Everything was so fast and busy. One thing that surprised me was that people on the streets did not look into each other's eyes. There was little or no acknowledgement of anyone meeting each other on the sidewalks, in the restaurants or the subway system. It was as though people were in a trance.

The city was overwhelming. Everything was hectic and that made me feel very nervous. There were all kinds of rules to follow in simply crossing a street, waiting for lights to change or ordering a meal in a restaurant. There was a stress to all this abundance that made me feel anxious and a little helpless, if not frightened.

Our school was partnered with one in Mississauga, where we stayed with families in homes filled with everything anyone could want, but with more unfamiliar rules. The families we met were from a variety of backgrounds. We were exposed to new cultures including Indian, Pakistani, Chinese and Caribbean.

There was unimaginable abundance. The Eaton Centre was full of shops that housed all my dream fashions in clothes, hats and shoes. The electronic stores

were full of gadgets that I yearned for. Restaurants were everywhere and there were so many different types of food that I had never known about.

The reality that made me feel uncomfortable was that it all had to do with money. If you had money in this outside world and you were smart, successful and capable, then everything was fine. However, if you ran out of money or if you could not fit in, then it could be that your fate would be that of the many homeless people I saw begging on the streets. In the middle of all of this luxury, I saw many destitute Native people merely trying to survive. None of that made sense and it scared me. I discovered that this magical world of wealth and luxury was not available to everyone. It made me wonder if I would ever want to actually live in this type of world.

Even though things were dysfunctional and difficult back home, I never felt as though I was on my own. There were family and friends and if times were hard we always knew that we could live from the land and have a meal of goose, moose and fish. Everything we needed to survive we had in the land. If there was no money, we still managed to live.

I have learned that it is possible to live in the outside world and still keep a connection to the land. I have discovered how to survive and deal with all of the demands in the complex outside world. Happily, I also learned how to live a sober life and avoid the traps of alcoholism and drug addiction. Without my sobriety I would never have been able to live a good life in the outside world.

Over the past two decades I have travelled much of the world, seen amazing cities and sites and enjoyed many different cultures. I have discovered that most of the world's wealth and power rests in the hands of very few ultra-rich people. More than half of the world population lives in terrible conditions with little shelter, insufficient nutrition, a lack of clean water and under the rule of tyrannical governments. That uneasy sense that I felt on my graduation trip so many years ago was in fact an epiphany. And it haunts me still.

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Taille: 1,63 m
Poids: 59 kg
Yeux: bruns
Cheveux: noirs

Missing since April 23rd, 2014
Age: 44 yrs old when she went missing
Height: 5'4"
Weight: 131 lbs
Eye Color: Brown
Hair Color: Black



Sindy Ruperthouse



Le Service des enquêtes sur les crimes contre la personne de la Sûreté du Québec demandent l'aide de la population pour retrouver une femme d'origine autochtone de Val-d'Or. Sindy Ruperthouse a été vue pour la dernière fois le 23 avril 2014 à Val-d'Or.

The Investigation Service of crimes against the person of the Sûreté du Québec are asking for help from the public to find an Aboriginal woman in Val-d'Or. Sindy Ruperthouse was seen last April 23rd, 2014 in Val-d'Or.

S.V.P APPELEZ / PLEASE CALL 1-800-659-4264

Cette récompense est offerte par un donneur anonyme et expire le 22 juin 2016.
This reward is offered by an anonymous donor and expires on June 22, 2016.

Toute information fournie sera analysée et validée par les enquêteurs responsables du dossier (Sûreté du Québec).
All information received will be analysed by the police force in charge of the investigation (Sûreté du Québec).



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